

Freedom

October 24, 2004

Watch

Marines patrol Khowst, battle insurgents
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Afghanistan holds first presidential election
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Spc. Chris Stump

Kaboom!!

A weapons cache is destroyed near Bamian earlier this year. Thousands of rockets, mortars and artillery shells were destroyed through the cooperative efforts of U.S. Army and New Zealand explosive ordnance disposal teams.

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Marines from Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, patrol the area around FOB Salerno ensuring the local population knows they are present and ready to respond to any situation. Here, Marine Cpl. Mark Cutter provides security during a brief halt on a presence patrol.

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Freedom Watch

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Coalition teamwork ensures election success

Story and photos by
Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan — After multiple concerns that there wasn't enough security to support the process, the Oct. 9 election day was incident free and Afghans went freely to the polls throughout Paktika province.

With an average of 85 percent of Paktika's registered voters casting a ballot, the voting process was deemed a success.

"This was a national process," said Afghan National Police Gen. Rahim Alikhel, Paktika province police chief. "The people supported the efforts of the police, (Afghan National Army) and Coalition. That is why the elections were successful."

While security remained the main concern in the weeks leading up to the election, the absence of any disruptions and the overwhelming turnout was the result of a partnership between Coalition and local security in the province, said Alikhel.

For Coalition forces, the election was the pinnacle of much time spent working to stabilize the country.

Security at the voting sites remained a key element, but for the elections to legitimately take place, the Coalition had to have as little involvement as possible on election day.

"Our role was to do what we were asked to do by the local government," said Maj. Dan Wilson, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, operations officer. "Our goal was to make it an Afghan election."

During election day, Coalition forces provided "outer ring" security, said Wilson.

"We spread our forces everywhere throughout the province, to react if needed," he said.

While the day of the election was the ultimate test for all parties involved, extensive preparations set everybody up for success.

"Really, security for the elections has been an ongoing process that didn't happen a few days or weeks before the election — but years," said Wilson. Election day was the result of years of reconstruction within Afghanistan. Through this reconstruction, enough stability was established to conduct the large election process. With police on hand at each polling place and thousands of volunteers from each district keeping a watchful eye, Wilson said election success came from an even larger group.

"It wasn't just the police or the Coalition forces that stopped any interruptions, it



was the population," he said. "(The election) demonstrated the resolve of the (Afghans) that they didn't allow (the enemy) to influence the elections."

While Coalition forces had limited involvement in providing security on election day, they did lend a hand in other areas. Transportation of the ballots to the voting site and back to central locations for counting remained a challenge for the Joint Electoral Management Body.

"The enemy couldn't get into the towns or villages on election day, but still had an opportunity to influence the elections by disrupting the transportation of the ballots," said Wilson.

To combat disruptions following the election, Coalition forces escorted the ballots to the different locations needed to document, catalogue and count the votes.

"It was a good arrangement for us," said Harry Phiri, JEMB Paktika province field coordinator. "(Coalition forces) were along so all the ballots remained secure."

Whether it was outer ring security and ballot escorting contributions from the Coalition, or the resolve of the local population and Afghan security forces, all parties involved agree on the success of the election.



Above: An ANA soldier presents his voter registration card in Sarobi district during Afghanistan's presidential election.

Top: A United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan official documents the registration number of a voter during the election.

"This was one successful step for us," said Alikhel. "It proved that when we all work together, great things can happen."

"Afghans are tired of war and are ready to move forward," he said.

For the Coalition forces on hand for the historic event, one theme was repeated.

"This was a victory for the Afghan people," said Staff Sgt. Jason Wistoski, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt., squad leader. "It felt good to see these people have an opportunity to vote and move toward a better future."

Afghans exercise rights in first vote

Story and photos by
Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons
17th Public Affairs Detachment

QALAT, Afghanistan — It was a cold, overcast day Oct. 9, but the people of Zabul province in southern Afghanistan braved the elements to cast their votes for president in Afghanistan's first democratic election in recorded history.

The boys' school in the center of Qalat bustled with men casting their votes for one of the candidates on the ballot.

In order to place their votes, the men had to show their voter registration cards and then have their thumbnails painted black to show they had performed their civic duty. Once they were handed their ballots with pictures of the different candidates, they went behind a curtain and cast their votes in private.

"Having elections is good for Afghanistan," said Malsoor Ahmad Farzam, a young Afghan election worker.

"For years there has been fighting between people over who would be the best leader for the (country)," he said. "Now, with the elections, we will not fight amongst ourselves.

"When we fight amongst ourselves there is no promotion. The election is our time to say 'let's not be separated. Let's be united and make us an important nation again.'"

Across town in the girls' school, women came together to cast their votes for the future president.

"This is a historical day, because it is for our future," said Nadgia, the head of women's voting for Zabul province.

"This is a special day, because the women are coming to vote," she said. "Both the elderly women and young women are voting, because this is our future — because we are selecting the president.



A woman places her ballot into the ballot box at a girls' school in Qalat Oct. 9. Election official, Zerlashta, watches the process to ensure everything runs smoothly.

"The ladies are coming to vote, because the future belongs to us — to us and our children. This is good for Afghanistan," she said.

The efforts of a combination of Coalition forces ensured everyone was able to cast their vote safely.

Security was a major factor in making the election day go smoothly, said Maj. Joe Walsh, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, executive officer.

The Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police were responsible for security, while other Coalition assets stood by in the area. Remaining indirectly involved in the security allowed the ANA and ANP the privilege of conducting



A young Afghan man places his ballot into the sealed ballot box while an election worker watches.

the election process as a nation.

And the Afghan forces, with all the training they received prior to the election, proved more than capable of handling the situation.

The results of the election

will take a while to tally, said Farzam. But the important thing is that the people came out to vote.

"I'm very proud to be part of the election process," he said. "This is a great day for Afghanistan."

ANA recruiting station opens in Badghis

Story and photo by
Lt. Col. Susan H. Meisner
Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

BADGHIS, Afghanistan — Local, Afghan National Army and Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan officials proudly opened the latest National Army Volunteer Center in Badghis Sept. 29. It will welcome young men from throughout the region to join their national army.

The center is miles from the next city, nestled between towering mountains – an oasis in an often forbidding land.

The opening of this recruiting center follows the opening of the ANA's regional command centers in Kandahar, Gardez, Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat over the last two weeks. The regional commands – as well as the 14 NAVCs – extend the reach of the national government throughout Afghanistan. They provide security, stability and a visible government presence.

The Ministry of Defense has based several hundred soldiers at each of the regional commands, with a planned population of a brigade-sized unit of about 3,000 soldiers at each. With approximately 16,000 soldiers in the ANA today, NAVCs such as this one in Badghis will further help the ANA reach its goal of populating the regional commands and achieving the planned 70,000-man army.

Governor Afzali of Badghis expressed both his pride in the new facility and his thanks to the U.S. Army, represented by Brig. Gen. Richard Moorhead, Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix commander.

"This was the beginning of the job – I hope to have a lot of successes from this recruiting center in the future. I am thankful for the reconstruction and other help of the Office of Military Cooperation," said Afzali.

"Essential to creating your security is the ANA – made up of people of all the major ethnic groups of Afghanistan," said Moorhead.

The discipline of the ANA soldiers and the way they present themselves has made an impression, said Afzali.

A small contingent of local women also attended the opening ceremony. Afzali expressed pride that 44 percent of the registered voters in his province are women.

"Women hold social affairs, teaching



ANA soldiers assemble for lunch in temporary billets at the Badghis National Army Volunteer Center where they will stay until reporting for training at the Kabul Military Training Center.

and other jobs, including jobs in my (the governor's) office," said Afzali.

In addition to guest speakers Afzali and Moorhead, Maj. Gen. Aziz Rahman, the commanding general of the ANA Recruiting Command, Brig. Gen. Mohammad Amin, the minister of Religion and Culture, the local mullah, local elders and other officials spoke at the ceremony.

The province can now also boast of its contribution to the success of the ANA through the recruitment of its young men to aid the country.

Enduring Voices

What have you bought or asked for from home to beat the cold?



Sgt. Jun Jun Fernandez
Co. C, 1st Bn., 505th PIR
"Nothing – the Army has given me everything I need to make it here."



Marine Sgt. Frank Kirkland
HMH-769
"Gloves and a beanie cap and long-sleeved shirt."



Air Force Airman 1st Class Nelson Emmons
ATOC
"A heavy blanket."



Spc. Zach Schlichtmann
TF 168
"Long-sleeved, cold-weather shirts."

Journey ends for Tropic Lightning chief of staff

Story by Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
CJTF-76 Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Second Lt. Chuck Cardinal was frustrated with his platoon. Looking back, he remembers ...

"I had a platoon that was not particularly strong," said Cardinal. "I used what I knew about leadership with these Soldiers, and I didn't feel that I was making much progress. It was very frustrating."

Then Aug. 18, 1976, something happened that would change Cardinal's outlook on the Army for the rest of his career.

A party of nine South Koreans, accompanied by two U.S. officers and four American military police, moved into the de-militarized zone to prune a poplar tree. The tree obstructed a clear view between two U.N. checkpoints. A North Korean lieutenant and seven other men met the party from the South near the tree.

At first, the North Koreans didn't seem bothered by the intentions of the tree-cutting crew. Then the North Korean lieutenant demanded the party halt its work.

When he was refused, a truckload of North Korean reinforcements showed up. The incident quickly turned into a bloody conflict, resulting in the death of two American Soldiers.

Cardinal was about 500 yards away at his outpost watching. He would have to pull his platoon together to make it through.

"We went to double, triple, super alert, and we were right in the middle of the de-militarized zone. I kept thinking, if anything gets started, we're going to get run over ... we're just an infantry platoon," said Cardinal.

"We got ready to fight. That platoon, that had been so sorry ... like a soup sandwich, but in the face of adversity and looking in the face of the enemy, I watched the platoon come together and get a sense of purpose, team and unity that was incredibly uplifting. It was on

that night, after watching all that had happened, that I fell in love with the American Soldier. It's been a love affair for almost 30 years."

Cardinal serves as the Combined Joint Task Force-76 chief of staff here, and is the 25th Infantry Division (Light) chief of staff.

Cardinal started his journey on July 1, 1971 when he began college at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. Recruited from his hometown in San

Jose, Calif. to play football for West Point's Black Knights, Cardinal earned the illustrious nickname "The Bull."

As large a man as Cardinal is, one could say the position of defensive lineman was the perfect position for him. But Cardinal says his eyesight was a slight problem.

"I was very near-sighted, but I've had my eyes fixed," he said. Cardinal added he didn't wear glasses when he played, and that sometimes things got confusing.

"As a defensive lineman, half the time I'd tackle the wrong person because I couldn't tell who had the ball, so I'd crush the guy who was getting a fake hand-off," he said. "My buddies called me The Bull."

Although Cardinal endured nearsightedness in his days as a cadet, he said football made him the clear-sighted leader he is today.

"Football meant a lot to me," he said. "It taught me a lot. I always tell people my foundation of character, to tell what's right and wrong, trying to stick with it and never give up, all came from football coaches."

Through his experienced leadership in the Army, Cardinal said the Army has changed for the better.

"The biggest thing that's changed is the quality of the Army," he said. "The Army that I entered into when I went to West Point was an Army that was still fighting in Vietnam. It was an Army that had a rough time in Vietnam, because it was not very supported by the nation and (there) was a shortage of competent leaders and Soldiers that cared," said Cardinal. "The Army was broken, and broken bad."

When Cardinal was commissioned in 1975, things weren't looking very "up." But Cardinal decided to take this bull by the horns and make it work.

"I was wide-eyed," he said. "I convinced myself, if you're going to be in the Army, you have to be in the infantry."

Cardinal's first assignment after West Point was in South Korea as an Infantry platoon leader. Here, Cardinal experience first-hand the difficulties of leadership.



Courtesy photo



Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl

Above: Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, CJTF-76 commander, (left) presents Col. Chuck Cardinal, CJTF-76 chief of staff, with a gift at Cardinal's farewell celebration. Cardinal has served the Army for over 30 years since he received his commission at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Top: Cardinal as a West Point cadet.

See Cardinal, Page 14

Afghans vote, embrace new right

Story by Spc. Dijon Rolle
17th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR CITY, Afghanistan — With the eyes of the world focused on Afghanistan, the new democracy conducted its first presidential election Oct. 9.

While Afghans cast their ballots, Coalition forces in Kandahar province worked behind the scenes to ensure the historic event occurred without violence and voters remained safe.

It's hardly unusual for the streets of Kandahar city to be filled with the sights and sounds of everyday city traffic. However, on election day the city streets possessed an unusual calmness as residents turned out in large numbers to cast their vote for the country's president — for the first time ever.

Coalition forces throughout the country prepared for the elections for several months working to prevent any violent attacks or incidents from occurring.

Despite their absence from the actual polling sites, Coalition forces spent the day patrolling the city, setting up vehicle checkpoints, and working with the Afghan National Army to ensure overall safety in the area.

These missions are nothing new to the Soldiers.

"It's very important for us to be involved, because we want to make it obvious to the whole world that we're just here as a show of force to ensure that these people have the right to vote. We want them to be allowed that opportuni-

ty," said 1st Sgt. Bruce Hall, Headquarters and Headquarters Service Battery, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment.

The artillerymen set up an operations center in Kandahar city to provide immediate support for Kandahar province, while soldiers from the Romanian Army provided additional security and escort vehicles.

"This is important for this country of Afghanistan," said 1st Lt. Bacana Doru, 281st Infantry Battalion, who was in charge of a security patrol during the election.

"The election and all of the things that are going on here are going to improve their life," he said.

Members of the Afghan National Army also conducted their own security patrols throughout the city and worked alongside local police and security forces to secure polling sites.

"It's a great day for us in Afghanistan," said Mohammad Husam, Afghan National Army soldier.

"This is bringing inner peace and security. There is much that I can do for



Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons

Baz Mohammad places his ballot in the ballot box at the polling site in Qalat City Oct. 9. The election is the first democratic election in Afghanistan in recorded history.

Afghanistan and I want to serve Afghanistan, because it is our future. It is a new day," he said.

Once the polls closed, Coalition forces throughout the country began providing security for election ballots being flown to Kabul for counting.

"When we see both men and women getting out to the voting poles it makes us feel as American Soldiers — as part of the Coalition forces — that we are actually doing our job and making a difference out here for the people," said Hall. "We can never take for granted the freedom that we have here in America."

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Maj. Troy Fuller, HMH-769 pilot, keeps his CH-53 Sea Stallion steady as his aircraft is refueled in flight by an Air Force C-130 Hercules. Fuller's unit regularly runs logistical flights to different locations throughout Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Photo by Lt. Col. Rick Mullen, HMH-769

If you have high quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please email them to carls@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.



Marines show presence, deter enemies

Story and photos by Spc. Chris Stump

17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — Amidst blowing sand and a crowded intersection, a platoon of Marines dismounted their vehicles and readied themselves for a patrol back to their fire base.

While on the patrol back, they showed their presence to the local populace, letting them know the Coalition was there providing security in the area.

Unbeknownst to the patrol when they dismounted, they would soon be acting on intelligence that suggested there were anti-Coalition militants in the area, and end up battling insurgents who attacked the patrol.

The presence patrols are nothing new for the men of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment. The company has been stationed in various regions of the country providing security, running frequent missions to gather intelligence and showing a friendly presence — as well as running raids when information suggests there is a target.

“Getting out and patrolling shows a presence to the people in the area. The more we’re out there gives the bad guys less of an opportunity to mount attacks against either us at the base or the local population,” said Marine Staff Sgt. Gregory Hoover, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, platoon sergeant.

The Marines’ presence is a major part of removing a haven for terrorists, something the Marines on the patrol can appreciate.

“September 11th happened in my hometown. I watched it with my own eyes and had a friend who died there,” said Marine Lance Cpl. Christopher Palazzola, Co. K., 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, team leader and native of Staten Island, NY.

“This is what we have to do to stop terrorism in the U.S. and all over the world,” he said.

“If we keep the pressure on them, the less time they’ll have to act on us,” said Marine Lance Cpl. Timothy Suehr, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, infantryman.

“It’s important we find the people who are trying to attack us. The more of them we find, the safer we all will be,” he said.

Aside from protecting the world from terrorism, the war has



Marine Lance Cpl. Robert Turner, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, keeps an eye out for enemy activity at the start of a presence patrol in Khowst.



Marine Lance Cpl. Christopher Palazzola, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, provides security during a stop on a presence patrol near Khowst.

also taken on the additional role of helping the Afghans form a free and democratic society.

“We’re also here to change Afghanistan and help them be democratic and allow them to have more freedom in their country,” said Palazzola.

“It’s also about helping the future generations of Afghans growing up and providing them with everything we have in America,” he said.

As beneficial as the patrols are for showing a strong Coalition presence, providing security and preventing terrorists from having a place to plan and carry out attacks, they also present an opportunity for information gathering to find those who may not be deterred by the Coalition presence.

The patrol always takes an interpreter with them who talks to locals to see what is going on in the area. Often, they will collect valuable intelligence just by stopping and talking to people on the street.

During the first leg of the patrol, the Marines made their way through a village and down winding dirt roads, stopping periodically to talk to Afghans near the roadway and see if anything new or suspicious was happening in the area.

“This environment is intelligence driven. It’s important we get out and talk to locals and be a good influence to have them tell



Above: Marine Sgt. Jason Chrjapin, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, gives instructions to his Marines at the start of a patrol near Khowst city, just outside FOB Salerno.



Left: Marine Cpl. Jose Ramirez, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines stands watch on the rear of a vehicle during a presence patrol.

us where the enemy is," said Marine 1st Lt. Luke Hardison, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, platoon leader.

"The more people we can get on our side makes it that much easier for us to do what we have to do to make the area safer," he said.

But getting out and doing this type of patrol is a little different than what many of the Marines learned in their training before deployment.

"We're getting Marines out of the mindset that everyone is a bad guy here," said Hoover. "Over 95 percent of the Afghans are on our side."

"We try to stress that you can't let your guard down, but you can't treat everyone like a bad guy," said Hardison.

"Everyone has to be a diplomat. Everyone also has to be cautious of what they're doing in regard to cultural sensitivities and local customs," he said.

This mindset has helped the Marines garner success in all their missions here in Afghanistan, especially the presence patrols and intelligence gathering.

Midway through the patrol, the Marines received intelligence about possible Taliban-linked personnel nearby, said Sgt. Jason Chrjapin, Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, squad leader.

"We're just going to go up the road and do a non-forceful cordon and search of a few houses," he said during the patrol.

But no matter how well the Marines handle the sensitivities of the Afghan culture, there are those who don't appreciate their presence.

Just after conducting a "soft knock" at a small compound and meeting with the owner, insurgents attacked the Marines' patrol.

Using the cover of darkness, the militants attacked the rear of the patrol with ill-aimed rocket-propelled grenade and small-arms fire just as the patrol was ready to move back to base.

Immediately, the platoon returned fire and quickly transformed from a presence patrol to a combat force executing their battle drills and defending against the attack.

After a brief engagement where small-arms fire was exchanged, the Marines drew back to the relative safety of the compound they had just investigated and called for illumination from FOB Salerno's artillery.

Within minutes, the artillerymen at Salerno had the sky over the area lit and the platoon scanned the tree line for the attackers, who quickly fell silent soon after the platoon returned fire and called for illumination.

Quickly going from a presence patrol to reacting to enemy contact is just one of the many ways this war is different than previous ones, said Hoover.

The Marines have adapted well to their new role as intelligence collectors, while at the same time showing their effectiveness as a combat force.

Constant training and using lessons learned from their combat experiences has helped the platoon adapt to an ever-changing battlefield and deter a stubborn enemy wherever they've met one.

"The way this war has been fought has been invented as we've gone along. It's really impressive that we've done what we've done here," said Hardison. "This mission really shows the range we can cover."

"The way this war has been fought has been invented as we've gone along. It's really impressive that we've done what we've done here," said Hardison. "This mission really shows the range we can cover."



Marines from Co. K, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, patrol a road near Khowst. The Marines provide security in the area and collect intelligence during presence patrol operations.

Herat Regional Command activated

Story by Col. Randy Pullen

Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan

HERAT, Afghanistan — “All of the Afghan people are looking forward to seeing the green berets everywhere serving the country.”

When Afghan National Army Lt. Gen. Shir M. Karimi, chief of operations for the General Staff, made this statement, it was an expression of hope. As of Sept. 28, the Afghan people have a much greater opportunity for seeing the green beret-wearing soldiers of their army everywhere in the country.

On that date, the ANA attained a permanent presence in all four corners of Afghanistan with the opening of its regional command in Herat.

The Herat Regional Command has been designated 207 Corps and will be called Zafar (Victory) Corps. Its commander is ANA Maj. Gen. Raufi.

The Herat command is the fourth regional command to be stood up since Sept. 19. Kandahar’s command was activated that day, followed by Gardez Sept. 22 and Mazar-e-Sharif Sept. 26.

The standing up of the regional commands puts a permanent ANA presence in western (Herat), northern (Mazar-e-Sharif), eastern (Gardez) and southern (Kandahar) Afghanistan and extends the authority of the national government throughout the entire nation.

Before the regional commands, the ANA’s Central Corps, located in the Kabul region, would deploy troops and units from the corps to wherever they were needed around the country. These missions ranged from combat operations alongside the Coalition in the east and south, to security and stability operations in the west and north.

Now, a command and control headquarters will be located at each regional command. An initial force of some 150-200 ANA soldiers will expand to a 3,000-man brigade at each garrison to conduct the missions previously carried out by Central Corps. Additional forces could be placed under a regional command as required.

The senior Coalition representative present, British Maj. Gen. John Cooper, Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan deputy commander, spoke about the path the ANA had taken to reach this milestone in Herat.

“The Afghan National Army has grown from nothing to an organization making a huge contribution to the security of Afghanistan,” said Cooper.

Cooper noted several parts of that contribution – enabling voter registration to take place all over the country in numbers well beyond earlier expectations, putting a stop to factional fighting on several occasions, fighting the enemies of Afghanistan side-by-side with the Coalition, and playing a key role in providing security for the presidential election.

He also discussed another important aspect of the ANA, that it truly is a national army.

“ANA soldiers see themselves as Afghans,” said Cooper. The ANA is a non-political, non-factional Afghan force.”

“I’ve met ANA soldiers in many places,” he continued. “All of them were so determined to do their very best for the country. The ANA is a shining symbol of the future of this country.”



Lt. Col. Susan H. Meisner

The Ceremonial Guard presents arms for the arrival of the Afghan Defense Minister at the activation of the Herat Regional Command Sept. 28.

The ANA and the regional command headquarters activated in Herat are symbols, said Cooper, symbols of the national government’s extension of its authority.

That authority will be fully extended with the completion of the presidential election.

The activation was completed when the 207 Corps commander was presented the Afghan national colors and the command’s colors by the Defense Minister, who then moved to the camp’s flagpole and raised the Afghan national flag to its top.

The temporary camp for the Herat garrison has only a handful of buildings so most of the garrison’s soldiers are billeted in Herat city. However, the permanent structures will soon be completed, followed by the construction of permanent buildings early next year.

Regardless of where they are housed, the soldiers of the ANA in their green berets are now a force on the ground in Herat to serve the people.



Col. Randy Pullen

The Afghan national flag flies over the Herat Regional Command garrison at the command’s activation.

Marines teach English to children of Khowst

Story and photos by
Sgt. Frank Magni
17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — While the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment does extensive work in and around Khowst province in terms of providing security and assisting in reconstruction, the work they are doing on Forward Operating Base Salerno is gaining recognition.

Responding to multiple requests from the community, the Marines bring 75 children from the surrounding community on to FOB Salerno twice a week to provide English language classes.

The three-month-long course focuses on students ranging in ages from six through 15, and concentrates on basic English speaking skills, but also teaches the alphabet along with basic grammar and sentence structure.

“It is equivalent to what is taught in the first or second grade in the United States,” said Marine Chief Warrant Officer Christopher Joy, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, Salerno English School administrator. “It is different, of course, because the students are learning to speak English the same time they are learning about the other areas (of the language).”

With the high demand for education in the area, the Marines have to take an equitable approach to the make-up of each class.

“To make it as fair as possible we give slots to each village and have the elders select which student they would like to send,” said Joy.

The Salerno School has students from 17 different villages through the province, with some children walking up to 12 kilometers to get to class.

By giving opportunities to each village based on population, Joy said the aim of the classes is to touch as many people as possible.

“There is little difference between teacher and students when it comes to language,” said Noor Mohammad, Salerno English School instructor. “By teaching a few children from each village they can pass on what they know to family and friends.”

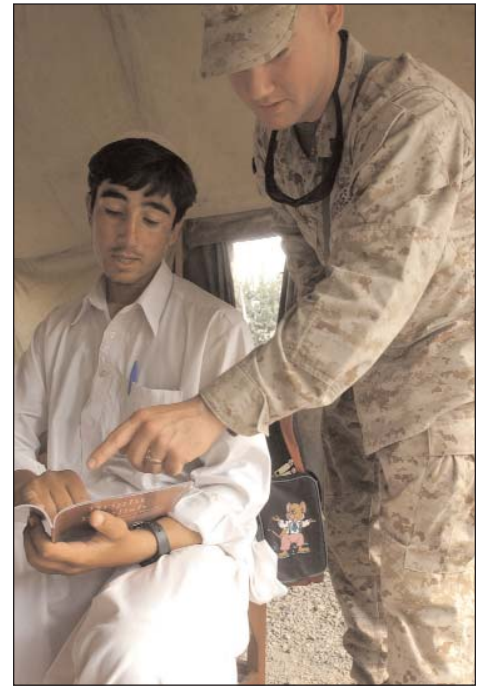
Mohammad is employed through the unit to teach the classes, a move that has multiple benefits, said Joy.

“We are helping the economy by employing the instructors from the local community, and we are also giving the students somebody they can relate to,” he said.

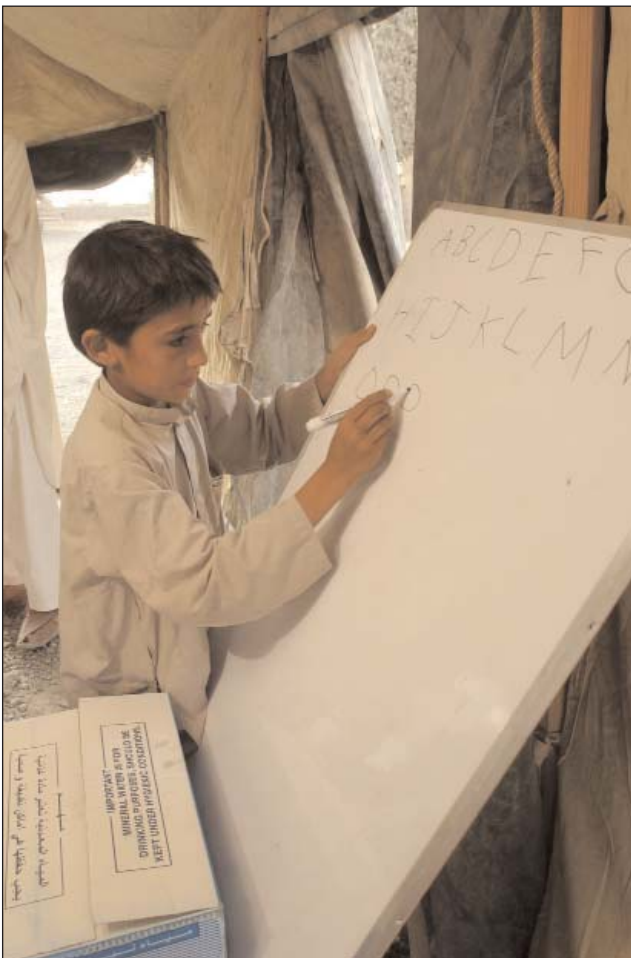
The classes’ only intent is to give young students a firm foundation for learning English in the future.

Mohammad said whether the students use their knowledge of the language to communicate with Coalition forces, or pursue it to higher levels, there are many benefits to knowing English.

“English is the interna-



Marine Cpl. Aaron Tompkins, 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, Salerno English School coordinator, helps an Afghan boy with his English language assignment. Every three months, Tompkins’ unit sponsors a 75-student English language class.



An Afghan boy from Khowst province writes the English alphabet in front of his class. The English language class is sponsored by the 3rd Bn., 6th Marines, on FOB Salerno.

tional language,” he said. “It is predominately used in business.”

He also said English is a key language to learn if the student plans on going to an international university.

Aside from all the positive feedback the unit gets from community members concerning the school, one of the most rewarding aspects in being involved with the Salerno English School is working with the children, said Marine Cpl. Aaron Tompkins, 3rd Bn., 6th Marine Rgt.

“(The children) are very excited about coming to the school,” he said. “They will even come up to the gates on days when the classes aren’t being held to show us they have completed their assignments.”

Along with the positive feedback, the school is also getting a lengthy waiting list for future classes.

Joy said this is exactly the type of reception his unit wanted out of setting up the school.

“We wanted to gain trust with the community,” he said. “By opening up our gates to provide English classes, we hope it will be one way to establish a positive relationship with the community.”

Deployment reunites siblings at Bagram

Marine and Army brothers get rare chance to see each other

Story and photo by
Spc. Francis Horton
CJTF-76 Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Many service members serve on long deployments away from friends and family, causing worry and longing by their loved ones.

But at Bagram Air Base, two brothers, a Soldier and Marine had the rare chance to serve together.

Marine Maj. Tim Barrick, Combined Joint Task Force-76 future operations officer, and Maj. Nate Barrick, a part of the U.S. Central Command advisory group, served for a short time together on Bagram.

Their time together was brief because Nate was only in country for a little over a week.

But the short amount of time was put to good use, they both said.

"We've done a lot of catching up in the (dining facility)," said Tim.

Nate, the older of the two, was the first to join the military, citing it as a lifelong dream of his to serve.

"Ever since I was five, I wanted to be a part of the military," said Nate.

With his inability to fly due to less than perfect eyesight, Nate opted to go to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to learn his Army trade.

Tim wasn't too far behind and followed in his brother's footsteps a few years later.

Due to so much exposure to the military from not only his older sibling, but also two grandfathers and an uncle who all served in either the Army or Marines, Tim decided the opportunities the U.S. Naval Academy offered was what suited him best, he said.

"You can do anything in the military through the Naval Academy," said Tim.

There were a great many influences for the two brothers before they ever seriously considered military service. Their father took them to Bangladesh, India while he was working as a bible translator.

"It was good to be exposed to a foreign country and different cultures," said Nate. Their father currently works as a seminary



Marine Maj. Tim Barrick, CJTF-76 future operations officer (left), and his brother Maj. Nate Barrick, U.S. Central Command advisory group, were brought together at Bagram Air Base by Operation Enduring Freedom.

professor.

Though both brothers have been in the military for over a decade, this is the first time they have had a chance to work together for an extended period of time, they said.

"We've crossed paths before, but we've never been stationed on the same mission," said Nate.

"A few years down the road we'll get together and talk about our time in Afghanistan. It's good that we now have another common experience."

**Marine Maj. Tim Barrick
CJTF-76 future operations officer**

"The only time we have to talk usually is during the Army-Navy game over the phone, asking if he's doing push-ups for the score," said Tim with a grin.

Their family is also excited about the opportunity presented to the brothers, and have taken advantage of the opportunity as well, said Tim.

"Our mom wants as many photos of the two of us as we can get," said Nate with a laugh.

As for the war on terror, both of them are grateful for the opportunity to see the other in action.

"It's good seeing Tim and hearing the praise of the officers who serve with him," said Nate.

For the two of them, Afghanistan has been a source of constant wonderment since the Soviet occupation.

"Both Tim and I were following what was happening in Afghanistan when we were in high school," said Nate.

Nate's interests have always lain in mountain warfare and military history. Afghanistan was everything he was ever looking for, he said.

The two are glad that they had this opportunity to serve together in Operation Enduring Freedom because it will give them one more thing to relate to later in life.

"A few years down the road we'll get together and talk about our time in Afghanistan," said Tim. "It's good that we now have another common experience."

Save body heat – stay warm, stay alive

Safeguarding the Coalition

Story by Spc. Cheryl Ransford
17th Public Affairs Detachment

AFGHANISTAN — As winter begins and temperatures drop across Afghanistan, service members and civilians need to remain aware of a new danger they will encounter.

All personnel serving in Afghanistan must remain vigilant to avoid cold weather injuries.

Cold weather injuries lead to life threatening illnesses, but can be easily prevented, said Capt. Robert Lowen, Task Force 325 Combat Support Hospital preventive medicine officer.

One way to prevent cold weather injuries is to remain hydrated, he said.

“Most people think that dehydration is only something you have to worry about when it’s hot outside,” said Lowen. “However, hydration is just as important when it is cold.”

Since the body is composed of mostly water, it needs water to not only function properly, but also to stay warm, he said.

“The problem with dehydration in the cold is that when the temperature drops to severely low temperatures, you don’t realize how dry the air is, which can cause cold weather injuries,” said Lowen.

To help prevent cold weather injuries due to dehydration, service members need to remember to eat properly and drink plenty of fluids during the winter months, said Sgt. Renee Robinson, 172nd Preventive Medicine Detachment, preventive medicine technician. Without proper nutrition and hydration, the body’s ability to defend itself from outside elements is decreased.

Cold weather injuries occur when the body is unable to protect itself from the environment.

“Several things can cause cold weather injuries – including prolonged exposure to wet conditions below 60 degrees Fahrenheit, which causes trench foot,” said Lowen.

The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine warns that inactivity, damp boots and socks, and tightly laced boots that impair circulation can speed the onset and

severity of trench foot.

“Clothing and foot gear that are too tight invite cold weather injuries,” said Robinson. “Making sure you have on clean, dry clothes, including socks and undershirt, will help prevent cold weather injuries.”

Two cold weather injuries that are common in cold environments are frostbite, which occurs when the tissues under the skin freeze, and snow blindness, caused by ultraviolet glare off snow, said Lowen.

According to the USACHPPM, frostbite is not serious as long as it is treated immediately. However, if not treated in a timely manner, it could result in extreme damage and, in the worst cases, amputation.

Snow blindness, like frostbite, can also be prevented and treated, said Lowen.

“Snow blindness, like most weather injuries, can reoccur if the individual doesn’t take precautions against future exposure,” he said. “One of the best preventative measures for snow blindness is to wear sunglasses that wrap around when in snow-covered areas.”

While all cold weather injuries are serious, the most severe cold weather injury is hypothermia, said Lowen.

“Hypothermia occurs when the body’s core temperature drops,” he said. “With mild hypothermia, the core body temperature falls to between 95 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Patients may be slightly cool and pale and are usually shivering and conscious.” Confusion, disorientation and dysarthria (difficulty speaking) are also common in this stage.

“When the core temperature falls below 82 degrees Fahrenheit, hypothermia is considered severe. Patients often appear to have died. Blood pressure and pulse are undetectable and corneal reflexes are usually absent,” said Lowen.

The best way to protect from cold weather injuries is to maintain adequate hydration, ensure nutritional requirements are met and properly wear cold weather clothing and protective equipment, according to USACHPPM.

Most units issue cold weather gear to Soldiers for use in cold climates, said Robinson.

“Some of the cold weather gear that is issued to Soldiers includes Gore-Tex jacket and pants, along with polypropylene top and bottoms to be worn under DCUs and Gore-Tex outerwear,” she said. “Along with the clothing that is

issued, Soldiers are also issued gloves with liners to keep their hands warm and prevent frostbite, and Wiley-X sunglasses to protect their eyes. If the Wiley-X sunglasses don’t fit the service member, they should find a pair of sunglasses that wrap around the same way and provide full protection from the sun. Glasses with 400 or higher UV protection are best.”

Even though the attire is provided to keep the service members warm, proper wear is the key to maintaining health during cold months, said Robinson.

The military’s acronym for avoiding injuries and staying healthy in the cold is just that.

“The acronym used by the Army to help Soldiers remain healthy during cold weather is C-O-L-D, which stands for keep Clean, avoid Overheating, wear Loose clothing in layers and keep clothing Dry,” he said.

Just like with any other piece of gear or equipment, the proper use of cold-weather clothing is essential to making it work properly. Leaders at all levels must ensure that proper levels of clothing are tailored to each mission.

Soldiers standing a stationary guard post need to wear layered levels of gear to stay warm, while Soldiers on a dismounted patrol or work detail need to wear less to avoid overheating.

As nearly every service member’s duties vary from one to another, it is vital that the method of staying warm is varied to meet the task at hand.

“Our unit is responsible for the growth and maintenance of FOB Salerno. Making sure the Soldiers have and maintain proper clothing for the cold winter months is something I do on a regular basis, especially now that it’s starting to cool off outside,” said Sgt. Willie Davis, Company A, 528th Eng. Bn., carpenter and mason. “If one of the Soldiers gets a cold weather injury, the mission is impaired because they are unable to do their part in accomplishing the mission.”

When service members follow guidance from their chain of command and use common sense, their chances of getting a cold weather injury are dramatically decreased, he said.

“The best way to prevent cold weather injuries is to use common sense,” said Davis. “If you wake up and it’s cold outside, put on a jacket and gloves. Making sure everyone is healthy will keep morale high, which leads to mission success.”

Oliver North visits Bagram troops

Story and photo by
Master Sgt. Terry Anderson
CJTF-76 Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — He may be best known for his involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal in the 1980's, but many troops here looked at retired Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North, now a best selling author and Fox News correspondent, as an American hero.

North was in Afghanistan to cover the first overseas naturalization ceremony ever conducted by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Seventeen Soldiers took the oath of allegiance, completing the difficult path of becoming American citizens.

"I got to be a part of a great ceremony today where 17 young Soldiers got to be American citizens," said North. "These are people who came to our country, volunteered to serve in our Armed Forces and who respect the values of freedom and liberty we're now sharing with the people of Afghanistan."

Earlier in the day, North and his crew covered the Combined Joint Task Force-76 shoulder sleeve insignia ceremony. The ceremony also marked the 63rd birthday of the 25th ID (L). Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, CJTF-76 commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe, CJTF-76 command sergeant major, awarded Tropic Lightning "combat patches" and Global War on

Terrorism Expeditionary and Global War on Terrorism Service medals to troops.

Covering the military and showing people back home what deployed troops are accomplishing is a passion for North.

"I really do believe the American people deserve to see how well their sons and daughters are performing in very, very difficult circumstances," said North. "This is anything but comfortable. We've got some of the finest young people we've ever had serving in the uniform of the armed forces of the United States. The American people deserve to see them when they're out there putting their lives on the line, defending us from people who would take our lives in a heartbeat if given the chance."

North's visit to Afghanistan was brief, but not lacking in eventfulness. He had time to accompany the Soldiers of Schofield Barracks' 58th Military Police Company on a presence patrol around Bagram village.

"I think it's great," said Master Sgt. Peter Ladd, 58th MP Co. tactical operations non-commissioned officer. "Oliver North is a former service member himself, he takes a lot of pride in the military and the Soldiers know a lot about him. This is great for the



Retired Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North, now a correspondent for Fox News, listens to a convoy brief before going on a presence patrol around Bagram Air Base.

morale of the Soldiers, for our unit to be picked to escort him."

North and his cameraman climbed into the cramped confines of a high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle for a two-hour patrol around the airfield. It was a relatively uneventful patrol, although insurgents were spotted just the night before trying to fire rockets at Bagram. Despite the inherent dangers of covering troops in a war zone, North loves his job.

"All I do is cover Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines," said North. "I tell people I have the best job in the world, because all I do is hang around with heroes like you."

Cardinal: 'The Bull' leaves Army after 30 years service

continued from Page 6

"That experience is probably what has shaped me more than anything else," he said. "It probably kept me in the Army ... to see the fruits of my labor and the goodness of the American Soldier come up before my very eyes ... that's what's kept me going."

Cardinal soon started to notice great improvements in the Army.

"The changes were so absolutely dramatic, an Army that once didn't embrace standards, to one that it became the touchstone of the organization," he said. "Now as I look out, not only Soldiers, but Sailors, Airmen and Marines ... it just makes your heart beat fast to walk along with them. They are so good and they are so committed. That's what's changed," he said.

Another highlight in Cardinal's promising career was during Operation Desert

Storm in 1991. Cardinal was part of the 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Combat Team from Italy, and was serving with the current U.S. Central Command commander, Gen. John Abizaid.

"It was a great adventure," he said. "I was in a great unit that was extraordinarily well led. Up until now, that was my highlight in the Army. Not only was General Abizaid our boss, but he was also a great man."

"After 30 years of service you're leaving," said Abizaid to Cardinal during a surprise retirement video. "I can't thank you enough for your service to our country. Thanks for the great service, thanks for a great sense of humor ... most importantly, thanks for defending the nation for 30 years."

Cardinal will continue to serve his country as a civilian working as the Standing Joint Task Force Pacific chief of staff sta-

tioned at Ford Island, Hawaii.

"It's been really neat for me (here in Afghanistan)," he said. "It's like my last lap. I feel like I'm committed to running my last lap hard. It's really special to me because of what I've committed to the men and women that came with me here from the 25th Infantry Division (Light). I'm hung up on the pride and history of our Division."

"To see the 25th Infantry Division (Light) go off to Iraq, and then to come with the Division here in Afghanistan ... it's been an incredible experience."

"There's nothing I feel more strongly about than my commitment to my wife, and my country, than what our Division is all about. It's been hugely uplifting for me to participate in this," said Cardinal. "It's all about the journey. What's special about the journey are the people you got to ride with. It's what really makes it special."

Reserve pilots defend troops in contact

Story and photo by
Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Lindsey
455th Expeditionary Operations Group

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Ammunitions troops charged with reloading Maj. T-Bear's A-10 Gatling gun had a busy night here Sept. 20, following the wingman's return to Bagram Air Base.

Less than 48 hours after Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, Combined Joint Task Force-76 commander, praised Air Force combat airpower at the branch's 57th anniversary celebration here, New Orleans Air Reserve pilots proved that they're anything but reserved when it comes to protecting U.S. ground troops in Afghanistan.

In defense of a U.S. military convoy, "S-flight 3" fired more than 800 rounds and

two laser-guided bombs, destroying a hillside bunker and attacking enemy forces.

Capt. Brian, and his wingman, Maj. T-Bear (full names are omitted for security reasons) thought they were going to have a quiet night practicing joint tactical air control — until they received a call to provide ground troop cover. The team was requested to divert and protect a convoy under attack. The pilots immediately headed out to provide aerial cover.

One of the convoy's combat controllers reported that their convoy had been ambushed, returned fire, and the attackers had run into the hills. The controllers needed firepower to provide cover for the convoy so the Soldiers could recover their injured troops and to prevent the attackers from escaping deeper into the hills. The risk of the enemy regrouping and returning to attack again was too great to let them slip away.

"This is exactly what we practice for," said the 81st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron pilot. "When we received the (call), we knew that stuff was going down. You could hear it in the seriousness of his voice."

With combat controller guidance, the A-10 pilots strafed the hillside with bullets and remained in the area to provide the ground troops cover "so the assailants would think twice about hitting (the convoy) again," said the major.

While attack helicopters provided cover and worked to destroy suspected weapons caches, 81st EFS pilots split their flight and took off to refuel, one after the other.

"Fires were burning, so (the helicopters) must have found something," said the major. "There was a building they also needed to take out. We strafed it, which did the trick."

Shortly afterward, the A-10 flight employed a

laser-guided bomb and destroyed a building from which the ground troops were taking fire.

"The A-10s here bring so much to the fight," said Staff Sgt. Chris, one of the special tactics squadron combat controllers who was part of the convoy. "When ground troops hear the low roar coming their way, they know the fight is going to go their way."

The bombs hit the target straight on, destroying the attackers' harbor without collateral damage, said the controller.

The pilots engaged in the confrontation just four days after landing in Afghanistan for their deployment, almost two years after the reservists' first deployment to Bagram. In 2002, the "Cajuns" provided overhead coverage for troops routing out weapons caches. Today, Capt. Brian, Maj. T-Bear and about 100 members of the 706th Fighter Squadron of Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans have joined forces with operations and maintenance members of the 81st Fighter Squadron from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, who served here in June 2003.

"We did quite a bit of show of presence back then, but not like we do now," said the major. "It's just incredible being here. Everyday I count my blessings that I'm lucky enough to be in a position to do my part in the Global War on Terrorism and to prevent another 9/11."

The 81st EFS "rainbowed" flight, joint active-duty and reserve units working together as one squadron, provides aerial cover for the ground troops whether it's scheduled or called in during a specific situation, such as the Sept. 20 convoy ambush.

"You are an integral part of the war on terrorism," said Olson to Air Force troops here Sept. 19. "The U.S. Air Force is the cornerstone of the military force today. When you're speaking of the U.S. Air Force, no one else in the world compares with our combat air power. Thank you for what you're doing for CJTF-76, the Afghans, and the 280 million Americans back home — and for getting it done right."

The 706th FS pilots, operations specialists and maintainers deployed here wouldn't have it any other way, said Capt. Brian, an activated reservist.

"Every one of us here wanted to be here to be a part of this," he said. "Some of us even requested longer than the 120 days we were allotted. It means that much to us to be a part of this operation."



Maj. T-Bear (left) tells Col. John, 455th EOG commander, about how he and his flight provided aerial support for ground troops in contact with enemy forces Sept. 20.

Communication

